



Snowstorm Mountains Herd Management Area Humboldt and Elko Counties, Nevada

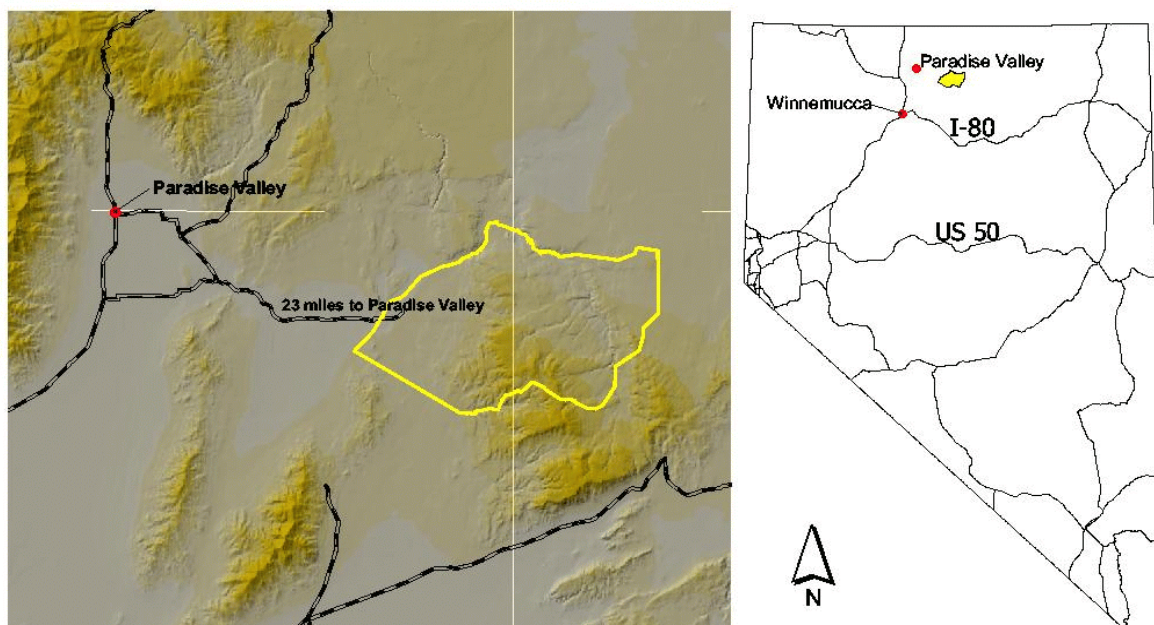


Location / Habitat

The Snowstorm Mountains Herd Management Area (HMA) is located in eastern Humboldt and western Elko Counties, approximately 45 miles northeast of Winnemucca, Nevada. The HMA contains approximately 145,538 acres of public and private lands. Terrain in the area consists of north-south trending mountains separated by broad valleys. The elevation ranges from 4,500 feet at the Little Humboldt River to 7,738 feet at Snowstorm Mountain. The climate is continental and semi-arid with warm, dry summers and cool, moist winters. Precipitation ranges from 6 to 14 inches, occurring primarily in the winter and spring. The area is also utilized by domestic livestock and numerous wildlife species. Typical wildlife species found in the area include chukar, sage grouse, deer, antelope, coyotes, and various birds, rodents and reptiles. One Wilderness Study Area (WSA), Little Humboldt River, is located within the Snowstorm HMA. Recreational use of the area is by hunters, fishermen and hikers. Significant mining and mineral exploration activity occurs in the western portion of the area, at the Twin Creeks Mine, but wild horses seldom use this area.

Vegetation

The area's vegetative composition is almost entirely the sagebrush-grass types typical of the cold desert and Great Basin. Low sagebrush and big sagebrush predominate throughout the greatest portion of the area. Other plant species include downy brome, Thurber's needlegrass, Indian ricegrass, bluebunch wheatgrass, squirreltail, bluegrass, spiny hopsage, green rabbitbrush,



grey rabbitbrush, bud sagebrush and winterfat. Small wet meadows occur throughout the area, primarily in the higher elevations. Forage species for wild horses are primarily the perennial grasses: needlegrass, ricegrass, wheatgrass, squirreltail, and bluegrass.

Herd Description

The appropriate management level (AML) for wild horses in the HMA is managed in a range from 84 to 140 head. Periodic removals are conducted to maintain the population within the management range. Horses within the HMA are descendants of ranch horses that either escaped or were released into the area. The majority of the horses in the HMA exhibit a bay, brown, black, or sorrel color pattern. Palominos, buckskins, pintos, grays, roans and white horses are also found in the area. Most adult horses are around 12 to 14 hands high (48 to 56 inches).